A

SERMON

Preached at the

CONSECRATION

OF

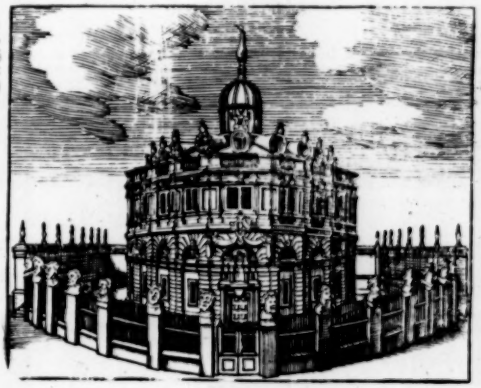
TRINITY-COLLEGE CHAPPEL

IN

OXFORD

APRIL 12. 1694.

By *THO. SYKES*, D.D. Fellow of *Trin. Coll.* and *Margaret*-Professor of Divinity in *Oxford.*



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1 KINGS ch. 8. v. 18.

And the Lord ſaid unto David my Father, whereas it was in thy heart to build an Houſe unto my Name; thou didſt well that it was in thine heart.

THESE words are part of *Solomon*'s Speech at the Dedication of the Temple, which he had built; wherein he takes a fit occaſion of bleſſing and praiſing God, becauſe he had then fulfill'd what he had pro-

mis'd to *David* his Father concerning that Houſe: *Bleſſed be the Lord God of Iſrael* (ſaith he) *who ſpake with his mouth unto David my Father, and hath with his hands fulfilled it*, at the 15th Verſe. And the Promiſe here mention'd, with the Words which God ſpake concerning this Houſe unto *Nathan* the Prophet, to be told unto *David*, we may find at large in the 2d of *Samuel* ch. 7. ver. 12. & 13. *When thy days be fulfilled, and thou ſhalt ſleep with thy Fathers, I will ſet up thy ſeed after thee, which ſhall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will eſtabliſh his Kingdom: He ſhall build an Houſe for my Name, and I will eſtabliſh the Throne of his Kingdom for ever.* This is the Promiſe which God had then fulfill'd, as *Solomon* moſt thankfully acknowledges; and then proceeds to ſhew the good intentions of his Father concerning this Houſe, and God's approbation of them in the words of my Text; *And the Lord ſaid unto David my Father, whereas it was in thy heart to build an Houſe unto my Name; thou didſt well that it was in thine heart.*

And we have alſo an account of this purpoſe of *David*, and God's approbation of it, in the

the ſecond Book of *Sam.* ch. 7. It was a trouble, as we there find, to that good King, to think that his own Palace ſhould be more rich and ſtately than the Houſe of God; and therefore, when the Lord had given him reſt round about from all his Enemies, he ſaid unto *Nathan* the Prophet, *See now I dwell in an Houſe of Cedar, but the Ark of God dwelleth within Curtains.* 2 *Sam.* 7. 2. He thought it highly unreaſonable, and inconſiſtent with Piety, that the *God of Iſrael,* and Lord of the whole Earth, ſhould not in times of Peace have a reſting-place, and a Houſe more rich and glorious than his own; and therefore, by way of enquiry, propoſes theſe his thoughts to the Prophet; who immediately gave him an anſwer agreeable to his pious inclinations: *Go* (ſaith he) *do all that is in thine heart, for the Lord is with thee.* v. 3.

And though God afterwards ſignified to this Prophet, that *David* himſelf ſhould not build him the Houſe he deſign'd, yet he ſufficiently declares his approbation of ſo good a work, and moſt graciouſly accepts of his pious intentions; for he immediately promiſes, that he will eſtabliſh his Houſe in the Throne of *Iſrael: The Lord telleth thee* (ſaith the Prophet)

phet) *that he will make thee an Houſe*, 2 *Sam.* ch. 7. v. 11. And again, *Thine Houſe and thy Kingdom ſhall be eſtabliſhed for ever before thee: Thy Throne ſhall be eſtabliſhed for ever*, at the 16th verſe. So acceptable and well-pleaſing to God was that pious purpoſe of *David*, that he preſently beſtow'd upon him one of the greateſt and moſt deſirable Bleſſings that could be granted in this World: Becauſe it was in his heart to build an Houſe unto the Lord, he promiſes, that his own ſhould be eſtabliſhed for ever in the Throne of *Iſrael*. And what better teſtimony could he have given of his approbation of this pious intention of King *David*? And what greater encouragement can be propos'd to any one who ſhall follow ſo good an example, and build any Houſe for his Service?

But though a work of this nature be never ſo commendable, though it be never ſo acceptable in the ſight of God; yet we live in ſuch an Age, that it ſeems more neceſſary to apologize for works of Piety, than for real Faults and inexcuſable Follies. Some men would be well pleas'd, if God had no Houſe at all, for reaſons that are obvious enough; and ſuch as I need not mention: Others will find

find fault with every thing that is decent, and cenſure all that is not abſolutely neceſſary in a Church or Chappel, when nothing can be too rich or ſplendid in their own Houſes, though it be never ſo ſuperfluous. Many will tell us, (and who can deny it?) that *God dwells not in Temples made with hands;* and that *the Heaven of Heavens cannot contain him*; and therefore they will ask, *What Houſe will you build him?*

Beſides, there is a great difference to be made between a *Jewiſh Temple* and a *Chriſtian Church*: The *Jews* were a People whoſe minds and affections were ſet upon Riches, worldly Pomp and Grandeur; and therefore, as God gave them Promiſes of Temporal Bleſſings, as being what they moſtly deſir'd, ſo he ſuited their Temple and Worſhip alſo to their temper and inclinations; But he has now declar'd, that he will be *worſhipped in ſpirit and in truth*; and that he regards not the riches or ſplendour of his Houſe, but the ardour and ſincerity of our Devotions; and therefore theſe men will ask, to what purpoſe are our vain Oblations? The Chriſtian Religion neither wants nor requires ſuch things as theſe: The primitive Chriſtians held their Religious

ous Aſſemblies in private Houſes, in their Κρύπτα or *Cryptæ*, in Cocklofts or ſubterraneous Vaults, in Dens and Caves of the Earth; and when were there better Chriſtians, or their Prayers and Worſhip more acceptable to God?

And we may plainly perceive, that the farther we have departed from their ſimplicity (which very much recommended their Religion to all ſober and conſidering perſons), the more we have loſt of their primitive purity and holineſs. Beſides, that ſplendour and beauty give offence, and ſavour too much of worldly oſtentation, or Popiſh ſuperſtition; and attract our eyes, and take up our thoughts, even while we are at our Devotions, and when they ought to be directed to Heaven, and fix'd upon better things.

Theſe things, and a great deal more to the ſame purpoſe, however vain, trivial, or fallacious they may ſeem to pious and judicious perſons, are frequently objected, either by weak, or elſe impious and deſigning men, againſt every thing that is great or beautiful, decent or comely, either in the Houſe or Worſhip of God. And it was in ſome meaſure to obviate ſuch ſuggeſtions as theſe, that I made

I made choice of theſe words, of which I am about to ſpeak; by which it plainly appears, that God did not only approve of, but was well pleas'd with that Rich and Magnificent Temple which was deſign'd by *David*, and built by *Solomon*: *The Lord ſaid unto David my Father* (ſays *Solomon*), *whereas it was in thine heart to build an Houſe unto my Name; thou didſt well that it was in thine heart.*

And it's farther to be obſerved, that notwithſtanding the objections above-mention'd, it ſeems probable, that this great work was reſerv'd for *Solomon* for this very reaſon, That it might be the more Glorious and Magnificent, and enrich'd with the Treaſures of *Solomon*, as well as the Spoils of all the Nations that were ſubdued by *David*. For thus ſays God by the mouth of *Nathan* to *David*, *When thy days be fulfilled, and thou ſhalt ſleep with thy Fathers, I will ſet up thy ſeed after thee, which ſhall proceed out of thy Bowels, and I will eſtabliſh his Kingdom*; and then it immediately follows, *he ſhall build an Houſe for my Name*. *David* (it ſeems) could not undertake ſo great a work, becauſe his Kingdom was not ſufficiently eſtabliſhed; but 2 *Sam.* 7.12,13.

but *the Veſſels of Silver, and the Veſſels of Gold, and the Veſſels of Braſs, which Toi King of Hamath gave unto David, did he dedicate unto the Lord, with the Silver and the Gold which he had dedicated of all Nations which he ſubdued;* as we find in the ſecond Book of *Sam.* ch. 8. v. 10, 11. And *Solomon brought in the things which David his Father had dedicated, even the Silver and the Gold, and the Veſſels did he put among the Treaſures of the Houſe of the Lord;* as appears in the firſt Book of *Kings* ch. 7. v. 51.

To give an account of all the Riches and Magnificence of this Temple of which I am ſpeaking, would (as I ſuppoſe) be ſuperfluous, and to no purpoſe. The whole Structure was great and beautiful: *The Walls of the Houſe within were built with Boards of Cedar; both the Floor of the Houſe, and the Walls of the Cieling. The Cedar was carved with knops and open flowers; and the whole Houſe was overlaid with Gold.* But thoſe who are deſirous of a particular deſcription of this Temple, may have it at large in the ſixth and ſeventh Chapters of the firſt Book of *Kings*. I need only ſay in ſhort, that it was as Rich and Magnificent as the greateſt and wiſeſt

1 *King.* 6. 15, 18, 22.

wiſeſt King of the *Jewiſh* Nation could make it; and it was ſo acceptable to God, that when he began this work, God again renewed the Promiſe that he made unto *David* his Father when he firſt of all deſign'd it: For, *the word of the Lord came to Solomon, ſaying;* 1 *King.* 6. 11, 12, 13. *Concerning this Houſe which thou art in building, if thou wilt walk in my ſtatutes, and execute my judgments, and keep all my commandments to walk in them; then will I perform my word with thee, which I ſpake unto David thy Father; and I will dwell among the Children of Iſrael, and will not forſake my people Iſrael.*

But it may be objected, as hath been before intimated, that this Houſe of God was a *Jewiſh Temple*, not a *Chriſtian Church*; that God vouchſafed his peculiar Preſence in this Houſe, and condeſcended in a ſenſe, as it were, to reſide in it: But Chriſtians now know better things, for *God dwelleth not in Temples made with hands*, and neither needs nor requires ſuch ſtately and magnificent Houſes, as this of which I am ſpeaking.

As if it was the duty of *Jews* only, to love and honour their Maker, and to do ſuch things as may promote his Honour and Glory? Or,

as if *Solomon* did not know, as well as the men who make theſe objections, that God, properly ſpeaking, does not dwell in Temples made with hands? He himſelf indeed puts the Queſtion, at the Dedication of this very Temple, *But will God indeed dwell on the Earth*? intimating, I confeſs, that he would in ſome ſenſe dwell amongſt his People *Iſrael*, as he had promiſed; but he immediately adds, *Behold the Heaven, and the Heaven of Heavens cannot contain thee; how much leſs this Houſe which I have built?* And he ſufficiently explains what he meant by God's dwelling upon the Earth, and more eſpecially in that Houſe, by the Prayer which he then made, in which he humbly ſupplicates the Divine Majeſty, that his *Eyes might be open towards that Houſe night and day; even towards the place of which he* had *ſaid, that* his *Name ſhould be there*; *That he would hearken unto the Prayer which his ſervants ſhould make towards that place: And hearken thou* (ſaith he) *to the ſupplication of thy ſervant, and of thy people Iſrael, when they ſhall pray towards this place; and hear thou in Heaven thy dwelling-place; and when thou heareſt, forgive*. His dwelling-place was then,

1 *King.* 8. 27.

v. 29.

v. 30.

then, and always in Heaven, as it is now; but his Ears were open to the Prayers of his Servants in that place: And why ſhould we not think, that he is always after the ſame manner preſent in Chriſtian Churches, and all other places of our publick Devotion, when he aſſures us, that *whereſoever two or three are gathered together in* his *name*, he is *there in the midſt of them?* Mat. 18. 20.

And though it muſt be confeſs'd, that he was pleaſed ſo to manifeſt himſelf in this Temple of which I am ſpeaking, as he does not do in Chriſtian Churches; for *the Glory of the Lord filled the Houſe of the Lord*, when it was dedicated, as we find in the firſt Book of *Kings* ch. 8. v. 11. Though (I ſay) he did in this Temple ſo manifeſt himſelf, as he does not do in Chriſtian Churches; either that he might the more plainly demonſtrate, that he graciouſly accepted *that* his Houſe, and that his ears ſhould always be open to the Prayers of his people *Iſrael* in that place; or that they might be the more fully aſſur'd, that he would always be preſent amongſt them; and therefore there could be no reaſon why they ſhould have recourſe to other Gods upon any pretence, or in any caſe whatſoever:

ſoever: Yet if the men who make the objections above-mentioned, imagine, that God would have this Temple, of which I am now ſpeaking, more rich, ſplendid, and magnificent, becauſe he was to make his abode in it otherwiſe than he does in Chriſtian Churches, they muſt needs ſuppoſe him to have that regard for earthly pomp and grandeur which he has not; and fall into that very error which they would avoid. For God dwelt and manifeſted himſelf as much in the Tabernacle which was covered with Curtains, as he did in *Solomon*'s Temple, as we may ſee *Exod.* 40. 34. And when *David* intended to build him this very Houſe of which I am ſpeaking, thus he ſpeaks to *Nathan* the Prophet; *In all the places wherein I have walked with all the Children of Iſrael, ſpake I a word with any of the Tribes of Iſrael, whom I commanded to feed my people Iſrael, ſaying, why build ye not me an Houſe of Cedar?* God was no more delighted *then* with a great, rich, and magnificent Houſe, than he is *now*; but he was well pleaſed with that Temple, which was then built for his honour and glory; and ſo he is now with Chriſtian Churches.

2 *Sam.* 7. 7.

But it's farther objected, that God neither needs,

needs, nor requires, rich and ſtately Houſes; and that our Prayers are as acceptable to him in the leaſt and pooreſt Oratory, as in the richeſt and faireſt Church. As if our Piety was to be meaſured by his neceſſities, and nothing was to be given to him but what he wants? Or, as if he ſtood in need of that Temple which was built by *Solomon*, or the Sacrifices and Oblations that were there offer'd unto him, when he plainly declares the contrary; *Hear, O my people*, (ſays he) *and I will ſpeak: O Iſrael, and I will teſtifie againſt thee: I am God, even thy God: I will not reprove thee for thy ſacrifices, or thy burnt-offerings to have been continually before me: I will take no bullock out of thy houſe, nor he-goats out of thy folds: For every beaſt of the foreſt is mine, and the cattel upon a thouſand hills: I know all the fowls of the mountains, and the wild beaſts of the field are mine. If I were hungry, I would not tell thee: For the world is mine, and the fulneſs thereof. Will I eat the fleſh of Bulls, or drink the blood of Goats? Offer unto God thanksgiving, and pay thy vows unto the moſt High.* And by the Prophet *Iſaiah*: *Thus ſaith the Lord, The Heaven is my throne, and the Earth is my footſtool, where* *Pſal.* 50. 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14. *Iſa.* 66. 1, 2.

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is the Houſe that ye build unto me? And where is the place of my reſt? For all thoſe things hath my hand made, and all thoſe things have been, ſaith the Lord: but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor, and of a contrite ſpirit, and trembleth at my word.

But, notwithſtanding all this, he was well pleaſed with the Houſe that was built by *Solomon* unto his Name, and for his honour and glory; and he himſelf ordained thoſe Sacrifices which he ſeems to deſpiſe: And therefore the deſign of theſe Texts of Scripture which I have mentioned, is not to condemn the building of *that*, or any *other* Houſe of God, nor thoſe Sacrifices which were required by the Law of *Moſes*; but to rectifie the falſe notions and opinion that ſome of the *Jews* had of him; he being infinite in his nature, and every-where preſent; ſelf-ſufficient, and uncapable of want; contrary to what they ſeem to have fancied; and to ſhew, that he reſpected the ſincerity of their love and affections, more than the number of their oblations: nay farther, that he abhorr'd their Sacrifices without the ſincerity of their hearts; though no queſtion they were very acceptable

ble to him when they were offer'd as they ought, and as he himſelf had appointed. And if we will give him nothing but what he wants, why do we offer him Praiſe and Thanksgiving, ſeeing he no more needs theſe, than he does an Houſe or daily Sacrifices?

And though the Sacrifices required by the Law of *Moſes* be now aboliſh'd, they being ſhadows of good things to come, which are now accompliſh'd; and therefore there is no reaſon that they ſhould be continued: Yet it's a dictate of natural reaſon it ſelf, that all men ſhould love and worſhip God; as well as the *Jews*; and give real and convincing teſtimonies that they do ſo love and honour him; and he expects, *that our light ſhould ſo ſhine before men, that they may ſee our good works, and glorifie our Father which is in Heaven.* *Mat.* 5. 16.

And though we grant God will in ſome caſes accept of our Prayers and Praiſes in one place as well as in another; not only in the pooreſt Houſe of Prayer, but in our own; be they what they will, nay which is more, in Dens and Caves, in dark Dungeons, and noiſome Priſons, as well as in the loftieſt and faireſt Church in *Chriſtendom*, when our circumſtances will not permit us to meet together, or

or allow us to provide more fitting and decent places for his Worſhip: For he does not require of us what we cannot give him; nevertheleſs it is ſtill as much againſt reaſon as ever it was, that God's Houſe ſhould not in ſome meaſure be anſwerable to our abilities; and we fall very ſhort of *David*'s Piety, if we can be contented that he ſhould have only a Tabernacle, or more unfitting place for his Worſhip, when we our ſelves live in rich and ſumptuous Houſes.

And were our love to him as great and ſincere as it ought to be, it is impoſſible that it ſhould not ſhew it ſelf in offices of love and gratitude. No man will believe, that we have any real love and eſteem for him, if we refuſe him a kindneſs that is wholly in our power; and for the ſame reaſon he is juſtly ſuſpected to have no true love for God, or zeal for his honour, that gives no demonſtration of it, as there is fit occaſion, according to his abilities. For it will not be ſufficient to ſay in this caſe, that he ſtands not in need of any kindneſs from us, and therefore he requires none of us: For though he is uncapable of want, yet the obligations of our love and gratitude are never the leſs; and he requires fruit of us that

that may abound to our account, not his own; and it is for our own benefit and advantage, not his, that we pay him any honour or ſervice whatſoever; and though he reſpects the good will and affections of the Donor more than the greatneſs of the Gift, yet he expects grateful returns from us, anſwerable to the Bleſſings which he has beſtow'd on us. And hence it is, that our Saviour declares, that *the poor widow, who caſt two mites into the treaſury of the Temple,* gave *more than all* the reſt, though *many that were rich caſt in much.* *Mar.* 12. 41, 42, 43.

And, that this has been the ſenſe and opinion of all good Chriſtians, in the firſt and beſt ages of the Church, is evident: For before *Conſtantine* the Emperor was converted to the Chriſtian Faith, as ſoon as they had any reſpite from perſecutions, and their numbers increaſed, they were not contented with their old Churches, but built new ones, much greater and fairer, in every City, as *Euſebius* informs us, *Eccleſiaſt. Hiſt. l.* 8. *c.* 1. But as ſoon as that Emperor had embraced the Chriſtian Religion, building of Churches, and other ſacred Houſes, ſeems to have been the great buſineſs of the Age; for he himſelf wrote a Letter to *Macarius* Biſhop of *Jeruſalem,* for

Euseb. de Vita Constantini, l. 3. *c.* 30, 31, 32.

the building of a Church about the Sepulcher of our Saviour; and signified, that he would have him take care that it might excell all other Edifices in the whole Empire for riches and magnificence; which was accordingly built, as the same Author acquaints us, *De Vita Constant. l.* 3. *c.* 33. Besides this, he built two others in *Constantinople*; the one called Εἰρήνη, the other dedicated to the *Apostles*, as *Socrates* relates, *Hist. Eccles. l.* 1. *c.* 16. The latter of which seems to have been as great, rich, and magnificent as that at *Jerusalem*, as *Eusebius* describes it, *De Vita Constant. l.* 4. *c.* 58, 59. not to mention others built by him in *Nicomedia*, *Antioch*, *Mambre*, and several other Cities and Provinces, as the same Author also assures us, *De Vita Constant. l.* 3. *c.* 50, 51.

The Empress *Helena* also, the Mother of this *Constantine*, seems to have been as forward in these works of Piety as the Emperor himself; for she built and consecrated one Church in *Bethleem*, in memory of our Saviour's Incarnation and Nativity; another in the *Mount of Olives*, in memory of his Ascension; besides many other Gifts bestow'd upon other Churches and sacred places; as *Socrates* acquaints

acquaints us, *Hiſt. Eccleſiaſt. l.* 1. *c.* 17. And no doubt, other pious perſons, encouraged by ſo good and great examples, were not wanting, according to their abilities, in works of the ſame nature.

Such was the zeal and piety of the firſt Chriſtian Emperor, and other Converts of that Age: Nor was *Theodoſius the Great* leſs pious and magnificent in this kind, when he reſtored the Orthodox Religion; For when *Arianiſm*, like an outragious torrent, had in a manner over-ſpread the whole Chriſtian World, and all the Churches were ſeized by Hereticks, the Orthodox Biſhops being baniſh'd, or otherwiſe forc'd to leave their Dioceſes, the moſt eloquent and religious *Gregory Nazianzen*, notwithſtanding their utmoſt malice and perſecution, taught and maintain'd the true Faith in a ſmall Houſe or Oratory in *Conſtantinople*: But, as ſoon as that Emperor had reſtored the Orthodox Religion, together with it's Profeſſors, he preſently built a large and magnificent Church in the ſame place, call'd Ἀναστασία, in memory that the true Doctrine of the *Holy Trinity*, had been there taught, and at laſt revived, and as it were rais'd from the dead, by the good Father above-

mention'd, as *Socrates* tells us, *Hiſt. Eccleſiaſt. l. 5. c. 7.* and *Sozomen*, more at large, *Hiſt. Eccleſiaſt. l. 7. c. 5.*

Thus did the great, the wiſe, and the religious, as well *Chriſtians* as *Jews*, think fit to demonſtrate their piety and zeal for the honour of God; and Poſterity hath hitherto prais'd, and ever will praiſe, their works, as long as Vertue and Religion ſhall endure: And if any man is offended with the greatneſs and magnificence of theſe, or other ſacred places deſigned for the honour and glory of God, and employs his thoughts in the contemplation of the riches and beauty of them, when they ſhould be lifted up to Heaven, the fault is in the Votary, not in the place of Worſhip: and all good men have much more reaſon to be offended with the meanneſs, poverty, and even loathſomneſs of many others, which although they cannot make our prayers, or other ſervices, unacceptable to God, if they be ſincere and devout, yet they are a plain demonſtration of the little eſteem we have for the Houſes of God, and his honour, if we can be contented, that he ſhould have no better, when our own are as rich and beautiful as we can make them: And it's a juſt ſcandal

dal to all pious minds, to ſee ſome perſons abſent themſelves from our publick prayers and the ſervice of God, becauſe they think it beneath them, or perhaps not ſafe for perſons of their delicacy, to appear and attend upon God in our Churches and Chappels; ſo mean, ſordid, and ruinous are many of them.

But it was farther objected, that, as ſoon as perſecution ceaſed, and riches and ſplendour were introduced into the Church, Chriſtians departed as far from their primitive ſimplicity and purity, both in faith and manners, as they did from their poverty. As if there were no *Hereticks* before *Conſtantine*'s days, as infamous both for their monſtrous Doctrines, and moſt leud and abominable practices, as any have ever been ſince: But ſuppoſing that this were in ſome meaſure true, yet it was the fault of thoſe wicked men themſelves, not of thoſe pious Emperors, or other nurſing Fathers and Mothers of the Church, who thought they could never do too much for the honour of God, or be too bountiful for his ſervice.

And though poverty and perſecution may ſhut Hypocrites out of the Church, and make thoſe Chriſtian Vertues more conſpicuous, which

which are not ſo neceſſary, or however do not ſo advantagiouſly ſhew themſelves in a proſperous condition; yet if perſecution, poverty, and contempt be the moſt proper means of advancing Religion, and it's Profeſſors are to be ſtarved into purity, the generality of good men have been long in an error, and Heathen Perſecutors were not ſuch ill men as they have been commonly repreſented. And though the primitive Chriſtians made ſo good uſe of their ſufferings, as to become more exemplary for vertue and holineſs, and improv'd them to the advantage of Religion; yet I preſume, that they who oppreſs'd and perſecuted them, were never the more excuſable upon this account.

And why ſhould we not think, that what is laid out upon the Houſe of God, and for his honour and glory, is well beſtowed? *Solomon* adviſes us, *to honour the Lord with our ſubſtance*; and this is grounded upon natural reaſon it ſelf, and equally concerns all men whatever: And nothing has given greater offence to the Enemies of our Reformed Religion, than our neglect of this kind of Honour. It was upon this account more eſpecially, that they at firſt clamour'd, and ſtill cla-

Prov. 3. 9.

clamour againſt our Reformation; and from that time date the decay, if not utter downfall, of Piety and Religion. How truly they charge this upon us, is not here to be enquired, farther than that it is plain, that our Church cannot be juſtly tax'd in this particular, who in her Book of *Homilies* declares, That *all they who have little mind or devotion to repair and build God's Temple, are to be accounted people of much ungodlineſs, ſpurning againſt good order in Chriſt's Church, deſpiſing the true honour of God, with evil example, offending and hindering their Neighbours, otherwiſe well and Godly diſpoſed.* And then takes notice, that *the world thinketh it but a trifle to ſee their Church in ruine and decay;* but immediately adds, *that whoſo does not* in this caſe *lay-to their helping hands, they ſin againſt God and his holy Congregation.* She alſo obſerves, that *God was ſore diſpleaſed with his people, becauſe they builded, decked, and trimmed up their own Houſes, and ſuffered God's Houſe to be in ruine and decay;* And that therefore *he was ſore grieved with them, and plagued them, as appears in the Prophet Haggai; Thus ſaith the Lord: Is it a time for you to dwell in*

Homily of repairing and keeping clean of Churches.

Before in the ſame Homily.

Hag. 1. 4, 5, 6

in your cieled Houſes, and the Lord's Houſe not regarded? Ye have ſowed much, and gather'd in but little; your meat and your clothes have neither filled you, nor made you warm; and he that had his wages, put it in a bottomleſs purſe.

And as the neglect of God's Houſe is a great fault and a diſhonour to him, as our Church declares; ſo I have ſhew'd, that ſuch works of Piety, of which I have been ſpeaking, are very acceptable to him: And it is obſervable, that the Elders of the *Jews* made uſe of this motive to perſwade our Saviour to heal the *Centurion*'s ſervant, becauſe he was *worthy for whom he ſhould do this* thing, for *he loved* their *Nation, and* had *built* them *a Synagogue;* which reaſon our Saviour ſeems to allow, for he not only granted their requeſt, but after he had ſpoken with this *Centurion* himſelf, gave this teſtimony of his faith, that he had *not found* any *ſo great, no not in Iſrael.* And it was this Faith (no queſtion) that was the motive and ſpring of his piety; ſo certainly do theſe two keep equal pace the one with the other, and ſo firmly are they united, that they can never be ſeparated.

Luke 7. 4, 5.

v. 9.

But notwithſtanding all this, ſome perhaps, who

who do not in general miſlike ſuch works of piety, of which I am ſpeaking, may nevertheleſs imagine, that what is laid out upon theſe, might much better be given to the poor, for God *will have mercy and not ſacrifice*; and therefore, why ſhould we ſuffer our Chriſtian brethren, the living *temples of the Holy Ghoſt*, to periſh, that we may build, beautifie, or adorn his material Houſes, which he leſs values than the pooreſt Soul upon earth? And how can it be ſuppoſed, that in this caſe he either requires or approves of our piety, when what is given upon that account might be beſtow'd much better another way? And God forbid, that I ſhould contend for works of Piety in oppoſition to thoſe of Charity, which is much too cold already: But I have ſhew'd, that God is to be honour'd by the firſt of theſe, as well as the later, according to our abilities, and as we have opportunity; and *Solomon* will inform ſuch charitable perſons as theſe, that *to every thing there is a ſeaſon, and a time to every purpoſe*; and it's ſtrange if there ſhould be none for this kind of piety of which I am ſpeaking. It's evident, that he who built that great and glorious Temple ſo often mention'd, was of another mind; and we ought to con-

Mat. 9 13.

1 *Cor.* 6 19.

Eccleſ. 3. 1.

Mark 14. 7. ſider, that *the poor* are *always with* us; and *whenſoever* we *will*, we *may do them good*; but opportunities of this kind of piety, of which I am ſpeaking, do not always offer themſelves.

It is alſo to be obſerv'd, that the objection laſt mention'd, is the ſame that was made by *Judas*, who *cared not for the poor*; and it may juſtly be queſtion'd, whether theſe advocates for the poor, be really ſo much concerned for them as they pretend. If they are averſe to works of Piety, it's juſtly to be fear'd, that they have no great inclination to thoſe of Charity; and, no doubt, if there be occaſion, they can as eaſily exempt themſelves from the obligations of the one, as of the other: They may ſay, that many who ask our Charity, do not want it; that many more do not deſerve it; that their own folly and wickedneſs is the true cauſe of their poverty; that they chuſe to beg, rather than to maintain themſelves by working with their own hands; that to give, is only to ſupport and encourage them in their vices; that St. *Paul*'s rule is, that *if any would not work, neither ſhould he eat.*

Joh. 12. 4, 5, 6.

2 *Theſ.* 3. 10.

But when all this is ſaid, and all that can be

be urged, either againſt Almsgiving, or any good and pious undertaking whatſoever, there will never be wanting, either fit occaſions for Piety, or true objects of Charity. And the truth is, that ſuch men as ſet up the one of theſe in oppoſition to the other, will part with nothing willingly, either upon the account of the one, or the other. If any thing is to be given to God, he neither needs nor requires it; if to the poor, they do not deſerve it; and inſtead of doing good, as they have opportunity, they can find no fitting occaſion of parting with any thing at all; and are ſtill ready with objections againſt that which offers it ſelf, and only approve of what at preſent is not deſired.

And why do they ſet Piety and Charity at variance one with another; and put thoſe things aſunder, which God hath joined together? Will the doing of one part of our duty make amends for the utter neglect of another? Can the Love of God, and Charity to our Neighbour be ever ſeparated? And will not the ſame principles of Reaſon and Religion which prompt us to the one of theſe, oblige us to the other? If we look into the Hiſtory of thoſe great and illuſtrious perſons above-mention'd,

that were ſo eminent for works of Piety, we ſhall find, that they were no leſs Charitable to the Poor, than they were zealous for the Honour and Glory of God. And, who are now more charitable and kind to the poor, than ſuch pious perſons? And at whoſe doors are they daily fed? If we wanted other examples of equal Piety and Charity in the ſame perſon, here is *one preſent* who cannot eſcape our notice.

And why, I beſeech you, ſhould any one think, that what is laid out for the honour of God, is as it were purloin'd from the poor? He lays the beſt and ſureſt foundation for their Relief, who by his Piety demonſtrates his concern for the Glory of God, and that he really believes the Religion he profeſſes: For though good men may be inclin'd, to compaſſionate and relieve ſuch as are in want, upon the bare account of humanity, and a conſideration that we our ſelves are liable to the like diſtreſs and miſery, yet our Religion lays much ſtronger obligations of Charity upon us; For it makes all Chriſtians, Brethren; and requires us to give for God's ſake; aſſuring us, that he will repay us, if not in this world (as many times he does) yet certainly at the general day

day of Retribution. Whatever therefore conduces to the Honour of God and Religion, and begets in the minds of men a perſwaſion that we are in good earneſt, muſt needs alſo incline them to a more ready and chearful performance of all the Duties he requires of them, and more eſpecially thoſe of Charity: And for this very reaſon, the Poor will find their account in every publick work of Piety; and he that does any thing that is for the Honour of God, and reſcues our Religion from contempt, is a common Benefactor to all good men, and more eſpecially to the Poor: For, by leaving behind him a laſting monument of his Piety, he leaves alſo a ſtanding motive to all the Duties, and promotes all the ends of Religion, as long as it ſhall endure.

And were our Devotions as warm, and the *Sacrament of the Lord's Supper* as often receiv'd, and as much frequented, as in the Apoſtolick Age, (which is not to be hoped for in a general decay of Piety) every Chriſtian Church and Chappel would be a conſtant fund for the Poor, and they would be continually relieved from the Altar. Beſides, then our Charity might be beſtow'd with better diſcretion, and more conduce to the Glory of God, and

and better promote all the ends of Religion, than now it does.

But it's needleſs to ſay more of this, when Piety and Charity have met together in the good work which occaſions this Day's ſolemnity; and if I ſhould inſiſt any longer upon this ſubject, perhaps I might ſeem to reflect upon our Benefactors, whoſe Bounty ought here to be acknowledged with all due Gratitude. It's no wonder, that ill men are wholly unconcern'd for the Honour of God, and cannot find in their hearts upon any occaſion to part with ſo much for pious uſes, as they frequently throw away upon meer vanities, or ſacrifice to their vices: Or, that weak and injudicious perſons ſhould fancy, that *whatever* is beſtow'd upon works of Piety, might much better be given to the Poor. But *wiſdom is juſtified of her Children*; and thoſe who have had their education in this place, better underſtand their duty both to God and man.

Luke 7. 35.

It was by the care and vigilance of a former Governour of this College, and the Charity of pious perſons, that after it had for ſome time ſtruggled with the meaneſs of it's original, and narrowneſs of it's endowments, (with

Dr. *R. K.*

(with all due reſpect be this ſpoken to the memory of our pious Founder), at laſt it raiſed it ſelf above contempt: And by the ſame care and vigilance of it's preſent Governour, and by *his Bounty*, and the Benefactions of others, who have been happily educated in it, it has of late been much enlarged in it's Buildings, though not in it's Revenues. But ſtill a fit and decent Houſe was wanting for the Worſhip and Service of God; and ſome have ſaid, this ought to have been the firſt work of all; Many have complain'd, that it was too long delay'd; though we were utterly unable to attempt it ſooner.

Theſe things were not unknown to our ever kind and pious *Preſident*; who was as deſirous to ſee this work accompliſh'd as any man whatſoever. That it might not therefore be longer delay'd, he voluntarily undertook, and moſt liberally rais'd theſe Walls at his own Expence; And many others, whoſe Charity is never to be forgotten, readily following ſo good an Example, have freely contributed to this Houſe of God; though their Bounty has fall'n much ſhort of what was neceſſary to compleat ſo great a work. But we have reaſon to hope, that they and others who

who have in this place laid the foundation of that Vertue, Learning, and other Accompliſhments, by which they are become deſervedly eminent in their ſeveral ſtations, and highly ſerviceable to God and their Country, will not ſuffer us to ſink under ſo good and pious an Undertaking. Praiſed be God therefore, that he hath put it into their hearts, to build this *Houſe unto his Name*; and may we ever live worthy of this his Bleſſing and their Bounty; may he multiply the good ſeed they have ſown, that they may receive an hundred-fold in this life; and when all worldly enjoyments ſhall fail, and theſe earthly Tabernacles be diſſolved, may he receive them into everlaſting Habitations of endleſs Bliſs and Glory, for Jeſus Chriſt his ſake; To whom with the Father and Holy Ghoſt, the Holy and Undivided Trinity, be aſcribed all Honour and Glory, world without end.

FINIS.